



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Policies and Procedures Minutes 07/09/2007

Arlington School Committee
Policies and Procedures Subcommittee
Monday, July 9, 2007
4 PM

Members present:

Ron Spangler, Chair
Jeff Thielman
Sean Garballey

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 pm.

1. Approval of Minutes, June 13, 2007

On a motion by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Garballey, it was VOTED 3-0 to approve the minutes of June 13, 2007.

2. Policy BEDH: *Public Participation at School Committee Meetings*

Mr. Garballey reported on public participation policies of Bedford, Lynnfield and Malden. In Bedford and Malden, the length of public participation (p.p.) is determined on a meeting-by-meeting basis by the Chair, and individuals are limited to three (3) minutes. In Malden, p.p. is limited to items on the agenda that evening. Lynnfield's p.p. is limited to items NOT otherwise on the agenda. Common themes include:

- Limited public participation
- Chair's discretion
- Proper conduct defined and required
- No personal complaints

Among this group, Arlington's current policy is unique in not allowing the Committee to respond during p.p.

Mr. Thielman said that p.p. policy works based on the ability of the Chair to "read the room," and that as Chair he tried to schedule controversial topics as agenda items right after p.p. to allow the Committee to respond. He also suggests scheduling the Superintendent's Report right after p.p. for the same reason.

Mr. Spangler suggested these other towns' policies provided extra flexibility to the Chair in handling p.p. on a meeting-by-meeting basis.

Mr. Garballey proposed three alternatives (which are not mutually exclusive)

1. Limit p.p. to 20 minutes nominally, but give Chair authority to extend.
2. Make no policy on total time, giving Chair discretion there, but keep speaker time limit at 3 minutes.
3. Give Chair the ability to respond to speakers, with rest of Committee directing questions through Chair.

It was agreed that Mr. Spangler will draft an amendment to our Policy BEDH along these lines and present to the subcommittee at its next meeting.

3. Policy BGB: *Policy Adoption*

Mr. Spangler reported that the union contracts referenced in Policy BGH are silent on matters relating to the Committee's method of policy adoption.

The subcommittee agreed that the intent of the policy is clear, that there be two readings of new of amended policies prior to any vote, but that current the wording of BGB is confusing.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Garballey, it was VOTED unanimously to recommend changes, as shown in Attachment A, to the full committee.

4. Liaisons to FinComm and Town Meeting

The subcommittee discussed amending Policy BDB: *School Committee Officers*, to emphasize the role of the Chair in maintaining effective communication with, and representation to the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting.

Mr. Spangler will draft an amendment to Policy BDB along these lines and present to the subcommittee at its next meeting.

Mr. Spangler related a conversation with Ms. Mahon of the Board of Selectmen, in which she recalled a past practice by the Board and School Committee of sending representatives to each others' regular meetings. The subcommittee felt this was a practice that should be re-initiated, with representation perhaps on a rotating basis, and agreed to raise the subject at the next full committee meeting.

5. Three-year Policy Review

The subcommittee discussed the method by which this can be accomplished. In the past, the review has entailed scanning through policies at a rate of about a minute per policy, and capturing any questions as appropriate for the Superintendent. It was agreed that a significant chunk of time at the subcommittee's next meeting should be reserved for beginning the review of sections A through D, sequentially, as agreed to in May.

Mr. Thielman raised a concern here that Policy DBJ: *Budget Transfer Authority* had been violated in the process of reinstating 8th Grade Drama and other changes adopted at the last full committee meeting. This policy requires that "[t]he recommended annual budget, as submitted to the School Committee by the Superintendent, shall include a prioritized list of programs/positions to be reinstated if projected operating budget surpluses are identified after town meeting's approval of the annual school budget but before the opening of school," which was not done. The policy similarly requires a list of cuts to take effect in the event of unanticipated loss of revenue.

The subcommittee discussed the effect on staff morale of publishing a list of possible cuts, and felt that a possible amendment was in line here to eliminate this requirement. Otherwise, the subcommittee agreed that this policy has not been followed in the FY08 budget cycle. It was further agreed that the Superintendent and CFO should be asked to attend the next subcommittee meeting to discuss this issue.

6. New Business

- Mr. Spangler expressed concern that the committee had not received a monthly financial update per Policy DI since April, and that prior updates had not included spending against grant revenue as required by the policy.
- Mr. Garballey stated that the committee had not yet received reports on Title IX or booster clubs as required by policy.
- Mr. Thielman recalled a past practice of providing a chart summarizing all policy-related actions and due dates during the fiscal year, and agreed to provide a copy of the most recent chart to the subcommittee for review at the next meeting.
- Mr. Spangler expressed interest in making the online policy manual more user-friendly – particularly, easier to search. He will discuss this with the Superintendent and report back at the next subcommittee meeting.

7. Next meeting

Wednesday, August 1, 4pm.

8. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Garballey, seconded by Mr. Thielman, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm

Summary of action items

- Mr. Spangler will draft an amendment to the public participation policy
- Mr. Spangler will draft an amendment to Policy BDB: *School Committee Officers*
- Mr. Spangler will ask the Superintendent and CFO to attend the next subcommittee meeting
- Mr. Thielman will provide a copy of the most recent policy due-date chart
- Mr. Spangler will look into improving the usability of the online version of the policy manual

· **Attachment A: Proposed Amendments to Policy BGB: Policy Adoption** (changes in **bold, blue** text)

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the Arlington School Committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented ~~as separate agenda items to the committee at different meetings~~ in the following sequence:

1. Information item -- distribution with agenda **at a regular or special meeting**
2. Discussion item -- first reading of proposed policy or policies; response from Superintendent; report from any advisory committee assigned responsibility in the area; committee discussion and directions for any redrafting, **at the same meeting**
3. Action item -- discussion, adoption or rejection **at a subsequent regular or special meeting.**

Amendments to the policy at the action stage will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the committee so directs.

~~Ordinarily new policies and policy revisions shall be submitted in writing to the full Committee at least two weeks prior to consideration at a scheduled meeting. Thus, time shall be given to permit further study and also to give opportunity to interested parties to react. However, temporary approval may be granted by the School Committee when policy in an area is lacking, or to meet emergency conditions.~~

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.

CONTRACT REFS.: AEA (Units A and B), I1-C
AEA (Unit C), XXV-B